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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to design and test a model by which two agencies might work together as a means of each agency more effectively serving rural families in disadvantaged situations. This publication presents an evaluation not of client behavior in detail as such, but of the model as an educational process with particular attention to the utilization of aides and counselors in working with low-income families on the basis of their overall physical, financial, farm and home situation. (For related document, see AC 012 984.) (Author/CK)

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AN EXPANSION IN PROGRAM STRATEGY TO ASSIST RURAL FAMILIES FACED WITH LIMITING CONDITIONS

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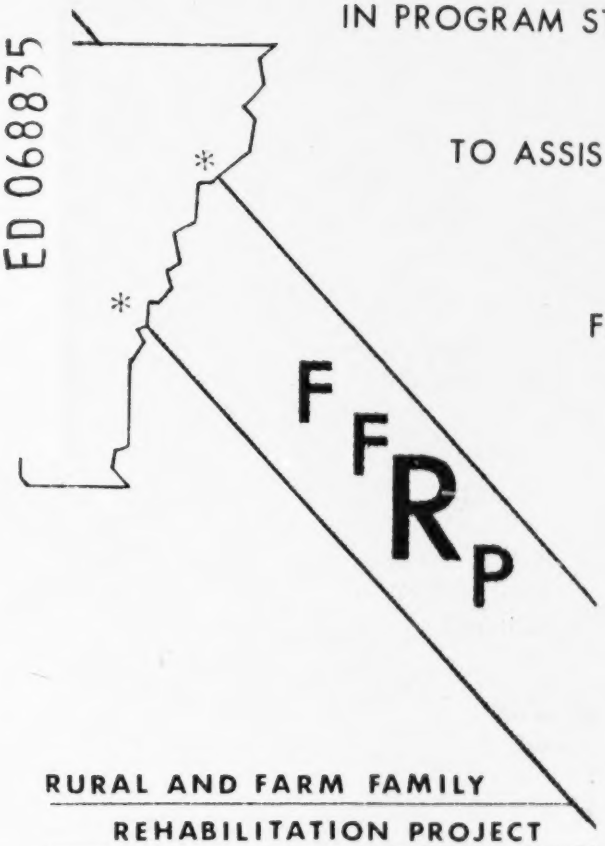

Evaluation of a
Team Project in Vermont

PROGRAM AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT
EXTENSION SERVICE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
in cooperation with
THE EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
and
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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ABSTRACT

This Extension report highlights the nature and results of an innovative project conducted jointly by the Extension Service, University of Vermont, and the State of Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation Division, financed by a grant from the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The purpose of the project was to design and test a model by which the two agencies might work together as a means of each agency more effectively serving rural families in disadvantaged situations. This publication presents an evaluation not of client behavior in detail as such, but of the model as an educational process with particular attention to the utilization of aides and counselors in working with low-income families on the basis of their overall physical, financial, farm and home situation.

Key Words: Rural manpower, labor utilization, poverty, low-income people, occupational mobility, values, employment.

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AN EXPANSION IN PROGRAM STRATEGY TO ASSIST RURAL FAMILIES FACED WITH LIMITING CONDITIONS

Evaluation of a Team Project in Vermont

By Evlon J. Niederfrank and Nelson L. LeRay 1/

INTRODUCTION

Rural families in Vermont, like their counterparts in other predominately rural States, have been confronted with serious human and physical resource use adjustment problems that have their roots in macroforces beyond their control - regional, national and worldwide changes in the supply, demand, and production techniques for agricultural, forest and other natural resource base products. At the individual and family level, adjustment and rehabilitation are difficult because of physical, educational, and financial problems. The Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project was developed to aid farm families, and others with rural natural resource related jobs, with family incomes of less than $2,000 per year and with a disability to obtain guidance and service. 2/

A significant proportion of Vermont families have low incomes. In terms of the criteria for the Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project, 16,614 or 27 percent of the rural nonfarm families and 4,400 or 32 percent of the rural farm families had incomes of less than $2,000 in 1959. Comparable figures for 1969 were $2,965 or 4.6 percent of the rural nonfarm families and $593 or 7.1 percent of the rural farm families with incomes of less than $2,000. 3/ Of the 7,168 commercial farms in 1964, 1,348 or 19 percent reported a total value of all farm products sold of under $5,000; while in 1969, 712 of the 5,105 commercial farms or 14 percent had farm product sales of under $5,000. 4/

1/ Rural Sociologist, Program and Staff Development, Extension Service, and Sociologist, Economic Development Division, Economic Research Service, both of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

2/ For an earlier, short popularly written description of this project see Bolstering Up Rural Families in Vermont, E. J. Niederfrank, Program and Staff Development, Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, March 1972.

3/ U. S. Bureau of the Census. U. S. Census of Population: 1960. General Social and Economic Characteristics, Vermont. Final Report PC(1)-47C, Table 65, 1961, and same, 1970 Census of Population, Table 57.

4/ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture. 1964. Statistics for the State and Counties. Vermont. Vol. 1, Part 3, Table 17, 1967; 1969. Census of Agriculture, Table 4, preliminary.

THE GENERAL PROBLEM SITUATION AND OBJECTIVES

Helping people is the real purpose behind the Vermont Extension Service. Currently, its program could be called five-sided. Help is being given to agriculture, the home, the young people, the underprivileged, and the community itself. The overall aim is to improve the quality of life; a Vermont where no one is left behind, where it is possible to live and work in a way that recognizes both the sweat and the sweetness of life and the need of both for human fulfillment.

But such a goal as that expressed above raises a couple of points that must be made. First is that change characterizes rural Vermont, seemingly more so than ever before. The dairy farming units are gradually getting larger as smaller ones give way; land values are steadily rising as new nonfarm families take up settlement; real estate taxes are high; a changing industrial economy here and there also affects agriculture; and local population becomes older as young people tend to leave rural areas. Thus, the Extension program today is different from last year; it will be different next year.

The second point is balance. Some would have Extension concentrate on the environment or commercial agriculture or the disadvantaged or on some other subject or problem -- the list is long. But Extension's 15-20 local advisors in every county (rank and file Vermonters who meet monthly with their county staffs), as well as the staffs themselves, agree that a balanced approach is best. The public in general as expressed by other State and local leaders also was beginning to feel the same way.

A Special Problem Recognized

The need for a better balanced program was becoming increasingly apparent, in order to serve the many rural families in disadvantaged situations. Most of these families were known to be relatively isolated cases, trying to run smaller than average dairy production units consisting of limited meadows and cropland, a high proportion of the land in brush and woods, barns needing repairs and better equipment, and both the farms and homes especially in need of better management. Many of the farm operators and their spouses were getting up in years. Nearly all had physical impairments either of poor health or the result of accidents. Health bills and unwise or inadequate financing were retarding needed improvements in farm operations and family living. Frequently family spirit would be found sinking, and a few were on the verge of losing their places and having to find a rental property in town and going on welfare. They also were faced with a general lack of basic education, trade skills, and up-to-date knowledge about farming and public programs that could assist them. At the same time, their communities were short on jobs and job training.

Furthermore, the community participation of these families was known to be limited. Many are not group oriented and cannot be effectively served through the formal organizations commonly used in working with people. Nor would it be sound from the standpoint of either social science or pedagogy to expect that disadvantaged and minority people can be effectively

served through being formed into groups with other people on a total geographic community basis. Instead, an intensive personal approach and special interest group approach are most essential.

Many families in need of rehabilitation are found scattered throughout Vermont today, as well as the whole Northeast. Most of them by far are not on public welfare. They strongly want to stay above the poverty level.

The point is that a big gap in program development was evident which was all the more discernible since the established or "traditional" programs of agencies often do not seem to fit the special conditions of these families. The programs generally are concerned with particular subjects or specific problems in more or less sophisticated agency-centered programs and methods geared to serving the already responsive, and do not generally endeavor to seek out the many "reticent" families who can only be lifted up by a more intensive personalized approach.

The overall, long range result of the impairments and conditions of the disadvantaged or less responsive families is growing family debt, decay of property, diminishing family income, destruction of land resources, decline of contacts with people and services. Just as important, there is also the ultimate decline of courage, spirit, and personal dignity -- motivation weakens. But worst of all, these effects hit hardest upon the youth and the elderly. The Extension challenge was to provide a path out of poverty for the youth and a mechanism to improve the physical condition of the elderly and help them obtain sufficent resources to live with dignity.

NEW PILOT PROJECT LAUNCHED

A Team Project

With the difficult conditions of many rural families in the State as a point of common interest and concern, the University of Vermont Extension Service and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Division teamed up to design the Vermont Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project - a statewide pilot effort. The goal was to determine what could be done to more effectively serve the increasing numbers of families who were finding themselves with their back to the wall. It was clear that something different was needed in the way of a program to help such families get back on their feet.

Focus was to be on developing working relationships and motivation of these less advanced, less responsive rural families, leading to their improving incomes and quality of living, through agencies more effectively providing rehabilitation and related services to such families. The families in turn would more fully utilize agency services to solve their special problems.

This project was an outgrowth of the Vermont Farm Family Project initiated in 1964 as an aid to low-income farm families, and conducted under contract between the Office of Manpower Policy, Evaluation and Research, U. S. Department of Labor, and the State of Vermont. 5/

How the Project Worked

The new Vermont Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project, initiated in 1968 and conducted by the Vermont Extension Service under a contract with the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, provided both outreach and counseling services to low-income rural families engaged in agriculture or an agriculturally-related occupation. It also provided vocational rehabilitation to individual members of the family or others included in the family unit. There were two basic criteria for acceptance in the project: (1) the net annual family income did not exceed $2,000 and (2) a family member had an identifiable disability which limited his or her vocational abilities or potential.

Project aides were trained to seek out and identify needy families as opposed to passively waiting for the family to find them. After locating the family, the first step was to identify and document the family's qualifications for enrollment in the project. The aide explained to the family member that the program is one of rehabilitation. He stated that the full range of services would be available only to rural families in which one or more persons had a disability. If the family was found to be eligible, the head of the household (usually a farmer) was asked to sign an application for assistance. The project team -- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Farm Family Rehabilitation Aide -- then initiated a diagnostic study.

The farm family aide began a comprehensive evaluation of the farm, including land, buildings, and related resources to determine this potential as an "employment opportunity." During this period of analysis, appropriate counseling and consultative services were drawn upon from other appropriate sources and agencies. Help was solicited for developing the potential of the farm, its land, and the family members. This was done for the purpose of establishing the existence of an employment opportunity for the client or clients being evaluated.

No project funds were expended for purchasing goods or services in connection with farm development as part of the diagnostic study.

5/ For details of this program see: Vermont - Farm Family Project Final Report, April 1965 - July 1967, U. S. Department of Labor, Office of Manpower, Automation, and Training, and Farm Family Project, Montpelier, Vt., n.d.

Project referrals were made to appropriate agencies during the evaluation for the handling of acute problems and for the purpose of developing the basis for the adoption of a development plan. The project aide routinely referred the client to his teammate, the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

While the aide was conducting the farm analysis and identification of problems, the counselor performed the medical and vocational evaluation of family members. A complete physical examination was required of the members, to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation. This was frequently followed by one or more special examinations, if needed. The evaluation frequently involved psychological and aptitude testing. Even if no significant physical or mental impairment was found and the family was not eligible for rehabilitation services, the needs of the family were identified and the family was aided in relating to resources available from other agencies. Denial of eligibility was occasionally made on the basis of disabilities which were too severe to permit any substantial employment.

Every effort was made to help the client contact and work with the referral agency to effective results. Often this required considerable preparatory work with the family, also preparatory work of the aide with the agency to explain the referral case beforehand, and in followup work afterward to assure that both the client and the agency were carrying through on plans. In other words, aides and counselors kept up a continuous concern in the case and this was found to be a key to the success of the project.

A time was reached when a case was put on the vocational rehabilitation list of closures and in the inactive file of the farm family aide. Contacts of the family with the project were then on an incidental basis or for some additional special purpose, since the family had now learned to relate to the regular resources as needs developed.

The project was designed specifically as a cooperative or team approach between Extension and Vocational Rehabilitation, using both farm family aides and vocational rehabilitation counselors working together with client families according to each family's overall physical, financial, farm and home situation.

The basic philosophy in the project design was that without sufficient attention to the physical health situation, "customary" extension education alone was not and could not bring these families to significantly greater advancement, and without meaningful extension education, vocational rehabilitation could not be as fully and easily attained, but by coupling the extension education and rehabilitation activities advancement of the family situation could be attained.

The overall goal was to get the family in shape healthwise and on the road to more productive employment and greater income.

Financing of the project was provided through an Expansion Project Grant (Sec.4(a)(2)(A)) of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, Department of Health, Education and Welfare; federal share 90 percent; duration March 1, 1969, to February 28, 1972; with total project expenditures being approximately $650,000 for the three years.

The field staff of the project consisted basically of 1 or 2 farm family aides, 1 rehabilitation counselor and 1 secretary in each of 4 district offices with a total of 6 aides, 4 counselors and 4 secretaries, serving all 14 counties of the State. At the State level there was a part-time project director, a project coordinator of the field work, and a casework supervisor of vocational rehabilitation.

Prospective client families in need were identified from information provided by county extension agents, welfare offices, town clerks or town service officers, and other individuals; also by field staff members themselves stopping in to visit families where it appeared they might need assistance.

In other words, there was a deliberate seeking out of families and helping them to assistance. This is different from the usual approach of public agencies responding to request of families who are willing and able to go on their own for help on particular problems, or expecting people who need help to attend educational meetings and read mailed information. Experience in Vermont was showing that too many rural families simply were not up to doing all this themselves.

In each county the project was first discussed with the County Extension Advisory Board. It was kept informed of the work as a part of the total extension program. The project field staff met with the county agricultural agent monthly to review active cases. The aides and counselors were available to meet with any of the extension staff members anytime about particular cases. Sometimes the home economist, extension nutrition aide or forester were brought into a case. The State of Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation Division was informed of progress through the monthly reports of the Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor working with the counselors on the project.

Brief Description of Families That Became Client Cases

The benchmark study of client families by the University of Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station as part of a regional project in cooperation with the USDA Economic Research Service, showed that nearly all client families owned their place; 54 percent had lived there prior to 1960, 15 percent before 1940; and most of the family heads were over age 50. 6/ Only 4 percent

6/ Data on file, Department of Resource Economics, Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station.

had any thought of giving up farming or leaving their present place, and only 7 percent had made any plans for retiring. All but 2 percent of the heads had a social security number but 34 percent of the spouses did not. About two-thirds of the families were in debt with a real estate mortgage and nearly half had personal property or note indebtedness. Only about half had an active life insurance policy; two-thirds had family hospital insurance. Housing was estimated as good in 60 percent of the cases. About 72 percent of the clients were actively engaged in dairy production but their herds were small -- generally under 25 cows. Many had not participated in government agricultural programs nor followed modern production practices, such as soil testing, recommended care of animals, use of dusts and sprays on crops, or herd testing programs. In only 13 percent of the families had any person received any special form of education, training or testing for employment. About a fourth of the client families were French Canadian.

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH STUDY

The general purpose of the study was to evaluate the utilization of extension family aides working in tandem with a specialized resource agency (Vocational Rehabilitation and its counselors) as a force in bringing about effective delivery of services focused on helping families better understand and face their problems of employment and living. A major concern was to study the project more from the standpoint of educational strategy than from the standpoint of analyzing client behavior as such in detail. Thus, we sought to look at such things as the following:

... Aide and counselor perceptions of program

... Aide and counselor interaction with client families

... Aide and counselor interaction with agencies they had to depend upon for support and followup of referral actions

... The educational content provided; the role of aides in adapting and interpreting content to the particular family or problem

... The aide-counselor operational system

a. Personal management
b. Mechanics, procedures, rules and regulations, records and reporting

... External support that the aides and counselors sought to build

... Response of clients to aides in bringing about changes; from where or whom does real motivation seem to come

... Description of aides and counselors; demographic characteristics plus their apparent attitude, basic philosophy and commitment to serving families as the focus of concern, not merely to some program as such

... Aide and counselor recruitment procedures

... Aide and counselor training needs, initially and inservice

... Relation of aide and counselor job descriptions to the real job

... Turnover and career ladder opportunities for aides

... Needed support training of other staff with the Extension system and other agencies expected to be receiving referrals from project

... Specific problems in working with aides and counselors

In order to study strategy, staff relationships and feelings, and operational procedures we had to be concerned with the specific program objectives of the project itself, which were as follows:

1. To develop greater coordination among services.

2. To bring about commitment and organization of services essential to maximum effectiveness in providing services to rural farm and nonfarm families needing them.

3. To strengthen selection, development and supervision of agency personnel so as to more effectively relate to and serve rural farm and nonfarm families having special problems or faced with limiting conditions.

4. To develop greater understanding of the community about program purposes, client situations and program progress.

5. To bring about delivery of program services in relation to total family situations; client is both individual and family.

The overall objective of the project was to see what could be accomplished in improving the overall situations of families faced with limiting conditions through a systematic, conscious team effort of resources in working with such families, of which there are many in rural areas.

Project Actions and Operations, by Objective

Important results of the project can be seen in the actions and operations carried out by staff members during the course of their work on the project. These also reveal a lot about the requirements and other nature of work with

disadvantaged families through a necessary personalized approach utilizing "personal contact" staff and involvement of resource agencies. The major actions and operations of staff are listed below by objective. There were, of course, interrelationships among them.

Objective 1 -- To develop a high degree of coordination among project staff and other agencies serving rural families.

... The Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project (RFFRP) assumed responsibility for informing families of services in relation to problems as identified by discussion of aides with the families.

... Extension aides were given training thoroughly familiarizing them with services available.

... Extension aides made interlocking contacts with resources on behalf of families.

... Extension aides informed agencies of general project and total family situations being found; developed initial agency commitment towards participation in project as based on referrals.

... Extension aides worked with families in preparing them for initial interviews with various agencies pertinent to cases; may even take client to particular resources needed. The aim was to train client so that he would know about services and know how to get additional information about them.

... Extension aides and vocational rehabilitation counselors worked as teams on matters calling for specific types of rehabilitation.

... Extension aides and vocational rehabilitation counselors conducted joint field visits to client cases.

... Combined interviews were held with families by persons of two or more agencies at the same time.

... Extension aides met with staff members of Extension, SCS, FHA, and others to discuss how references are to be handled and cases followed up.

... Numerous services were provided in cooperation with county agent, so that he could function as a primary link in the program.

... Extension aides and vocational rehabilitation counselors did some paraprofessional activities of each other and of staff of other agencies; thus freeing each other from certain details.

... Extension aides recruited for special manpower employment and agency training programs reciprocally.

Objective 2 -- To bring about commitment and organization of services essential to maximum effectiveness in providing services to rural farm and nonfarm families needing them.

... The project established outreach facilities and locations to serve families in disadvantaged situations as an augment to existing programs.

... Extension and other agencies took added responsibility for directing and implementing programs for the benefit of better serving families in disadvantaged situations. This involvement, providing for location of program in the Extension system, facilitated the work of Extension aides as it gave the project a base in an established agency.

... Methods of operation were established to insure meaningful planned followup with families, adapted to fit the policy and procedures of given agencies; a farm plan was often developed and checked.

... "Standard" procedures have been changed to facilitate motivation and action on the part of both agencies and families.

... Change was made in roles of some staff members; e.g., Extension aides were assigned some roles of the professional rehabilitation counselors; which opened up bottlenecks or points of delay.

... Minor or administrative visits to clients by various workers were reduced through planned scheduling of visits based on weekly reviews of cases by the staff team.

... Vocational Rehabilitation has permitted employment of additional counselors and facilitated their training to work as team members in the joint RFFRP program. "Standard" requirements now looked at more closely and adapted to program situation.

... Establishment of Extension aide position in State personnel classification system; used as a guide in aide appointment but allows flexibility for use of Extension.

... Acceptance of Extension aide-vocational rehabilitation counselor step-up in career or job level. One aide became a vocational rehabilitation counselor.

... Initial enrollment of client family by Extension aide automatically established the vocational rehabilitation counselor and county agent as members of team responsible for the case, and cases are regularly reviewed using special forms as tools. All this enhanced development

of service relationships with these and other agencies. Aides and counselors are additional arms to County Extension and other agencies for working with disadvantaged families.

Objective 3 -- To strengthen selection, development and supervision of agency personnel so as to more effectively relate to and serve rural farm and nonfarm families.

... Preparation of written guidelines; job descriptions; Extension aide position was classified in State personnel system as part of RFFRP program.

... Prospective candidates were identified from various sources of reliable information.

... Candidates were systematically interviewed, with much weight given to candidate's attitudes about RFFRP and relevant program purposes, apparent sensitivity to family situations, work relationship attitudes, apparent "horse sense."

... Carefully planned orientation training of two weeks was conducted.

... Coordinating, facilitating roles were especially stressed throughout training and work of staff; candidates and staff know that they are not necessarily to function as experts.

... Extension aides and vocational rehabilitation counselors were closely supervised and assisted; daily records were kept; aides and counselors were evaluated in face-to-face visits with clients.

... Definite continued program of specific staff training was provided, supportive of all aspects of program; includes group and individual agencies, supervisor's counseling, technical training from various agencies or other resources, all of which also supported the interest and involvement of the other agencies in the program mission.

... There was regularly scheduled counseling of supervisor individually with aides and counselors.

... Another factor of study was the rewards and satisfactions of aides and counselors; also the perceived identification of aides and counselors.

Objective 4 -- To develop greater understanding of community about program purposes, client situations and program progress.

... Face-to-face interviews were held with various town officials.

... Face-to-face interviews were held with community leaders, clergymen, etc.

... Extension aides attended various community meetings.

... Aides tended to become recognized as broad-gauged officials or spokesmen who could speak authoritatively about disadvantaged situations and program operations. They often provided helpful information for local decisionmaking and establishment of community attitudes. Both aides and counselors became respected discussants on behalf of clients, before officials and in community meetings.

... Wide media coverage of program. Reporters sought out Extension aides and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors for accurate information, "promotion" or public relations material.

... Activities of RFFRP program included in Extension information materials.

... Close relationship of program of Extension has worked to the benefit of both; Extension has stature to share, and the project supports professed Extension aims for wider educational program.

Objective 5 -- To bring about more delivery of various agency services in relation to total family situation; client is both individual and family.

... Individual family checks made frequently identified an individual defect or difficulty needing attention which was also related to other factors in total family situation needing consideration in treating the personal problem.

... Family checks also frequently revealed the family problem situation as mainly a farm or family management problem, calling for one or more kinds of assistance other than physical rehabilitation, e.g., credit, improved equipment, new operational knowledge, home repairs, different work schedule, children needs.

... RFFRP educational-rehabilitation-assistance program was always planned, conducted and evaluated in terms of total family situation. The idea was that the Extension aide serves truly as a generalist; he has the advantage of having no particular agency axe to grind except that of service to the people on matters of their concern.

Records and Evaluation

Excellent records have been kept on the work of the project throughout the years of its operation. These include records of all contacts with all the families, including what was done with them and their progress; records of all the referrals to other resources and the results of the referrals; and records of all contacts of field staff with supervisors. 7/

7/ See Appendix for list of farms used to record project data.

In addition to information from these data, the evaluative writeup of the project now being completed is also based on three weeks of field work in Vermont by the author, which included interviews with all field staff and State staff members, with the officials of State agencies involved, with some of the local field personnel of agencies to whom referrals were made, and with a number of client families representative of the types of cases served. The official project proposal and annual reports of the project also provided helpful information.

RESULTS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Types of Assistance

The project has resulted in two broad areas of project action and accomplishment. One was the general or public type in which there was work with agencies and officials in the development of policies and programs relevant to the concerns of disadvantaged families. Secondly was the major work of the project which consisted of the assistances provided and accomplishments of the individual families.

1. Public Type Results

Employment training -- A major public contribution of the project was the part it played in getting certain Manpower Development Training Act training courses established and getting persons among the client families of the project enrolled in these courses. The liaison was spearheaded by the project at the State level working with the State CAMPS (Coordinated Area Manpower Planning System) having a responsibility for the MDTA training program in cooperation with the Department of Employment Security, resulting in expanding the outreach of the program to rural people who normally would not be reached by it.

Below is a list of major courses which were offered through cooperation of the State MDTA program and the State Departments of Education and Employment Security supported the project:

Farm Equipment Repair	Adult Basic Education
Auto Mechanics	High School Equivalency
Farm Building Maintenance	Practical Nursing
Secretarial, Clerk Typist	Nursing Aide Work
Christmas Decoration and Wreathmaking	Cook and Cooking Helper

This training has provided development of skills for employment, and members of client families of the project participated in them and have improved their employment as a result. Considerable credit is given to the project by State officials for assistance in getting these training courses established and getting enrollment in them.

Public attitude development -- Another public contribution of the project has been the information provided from time to time to welfare and other officials about rural disadvantaged situations to help in decisionmaking pertinent to program adjustments. Information about rural conditions and the project is also presented by project staff members to community organization meetings and agency staff meetings upon occasion. The public image of the project was found to be generally favorable as indicated by interviews with officials, agency people, and client families. Persons were heard to say, "Well, for once this is the way a program ought to work in dealing with this type of problem."

2. Individual Family Type Assistances and Results

It is noteworthy that a total of 1,228 families embracing 4,826 persons were enrolled and served by the project in the three years from its beginning March 1, 1969, to February 28, 1972, of which 850 families were worked with quite intensely, including health examinations and restoration services.

The cases which follow illustrate the wide variation in type of family enrolled in the Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project, the agency support brought to bear on their problems, and accomplishments. 8/

CASE #1, Limited Agricultural Potential - Potential for Off-farm Work and Maple and Woods Products

This family is the fifth generation living on this small farm. The family members are the farmer, age 57, his wife, age 46, and a daughter, age 9. Farmer has 8 years of schooling; wife has 15 and is a registered nurse; daughter attends a local school and is in grade 3.

This is a small farm consisting of only 65 acres, 15 in tillage and the balance in woodland. The meadows are very wet with alders growing into the fields. The pasture is very steep and rocky. No dairy operation has been conducted since 1965. Client states that continual upgrading of requirements by the Department of Health played a large part in the decision to abandon dairying.

8/ This section is based primarily upon information supplied by Lester Ravlin, Project Director, RFFRP.

The problems encountered are as follows:

1. Development of income producing enterprises
2. Upgrading of present efforts
3. Improving client's general health
4. Providing training in new enterprises

The following agencies participated in this family's development:

1. Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project
2. Department of Health
3. Vermont Maple Sugar Association
4. Veterans Administration
5. Cooperative Area Manpower Planning System
6. Vermont Employment Security
7. Vermont Department of Education
8. County Forester
9. Department of Social Security
10. Department of Mental Health

Accomplishments noted in the following areas:

1. Health:

   A. General medical exam
   B. Cardiovascular exam
   C. EKG and chest X-ray
   D. Inhalation therapy
   E. Dental exam
   F. Dental repair and bridge work

2. Education and Training:

   A. FFRP provided introduction to the agencies listed and assisted in analyzing and evaluating the services offered by these agencies.

   B. FFRP provided the motivation to encourage this family to have their water tested.

   C. FFRP made numerous calls to Department of Mental Health to ensure that this family's interest in developing a home for mentally rehabilitated persons was not forgotten.

   D. Informed and encouraged client to attend Maple Sugar Makers Meeting so as to improve his knowledge of current practices and marketing conditions. As a result farmer and wife did attend these meetings.

   E. FFRP provided necessary forms to client so that he might make application to Veterans Administration and assisted in the actual process of application by assisting with the filling out of forms.

F. The family's name was submitted to CAMPS, Employment Security, and the Department of Education and as a result wife was enrolled in an MDTA course.

G. FFRP encouraged family to secure the services of the County Forester in evaluating their present maple operation and to request assistance and training in installing a pipeline operation. As a result of this encouragement the County Agent called on this family and provided the training that they wanted and needed.

To our knowledge this family had never worked with any of the agencies that have been involved in this family's development nor had they ever been contacted by any of them previously.

Summary:

1. Improved general health of farmer
2. Improved maple production practices
3. The following changes were noted in income during the period 11-10-69/7-20-71:

A.	Social Security Benefits	$ 80.00 per month
B.	Veterans Disability	138.00 "
C.	Foster Care Wards Arranged	340.00 per month

The family received training in pricing, production marketing, and promotion of maple and wood products. Introduction and use of laborsaving equipment, such as pipeline sap collection. New equipment purchased and installed to improve quality and quantity of woodcraft products.

We feel that the changes that have been noted have strengthened this family unit and allows them to meet their financial obligation and provide an adequate living to the family in a situation that they all enjoy.

CASE #2, Farm Operator Age 40 - Rundown, Self-Sufficient Hill Farm, No Electricity

This family consists of farmer, age 40, 8th grade education; his wife, age 39, 12th grade education; son, age 13, in 7th grade; and daughter, age 3.

They are living on a rundown 185-acre hill farm 2 miles from electricity, neighbors, and highway. The property is owned jointly by him and his mother. The mother is receiving Old Age Assistance. The family is living in a one-room house with husband and 13-year-old son sleeping in one double bunk and wife and daughter sleeping in the other.

Farm is supposed to be a market garden but only a small amount is sold. There is a good sugarbush potential which has not been used. There is an attempt at self-sufficiency with a couple of cows, calves, and a small

flock of hens. Client does not appear to be lazy but his efforts do not result in monetary gain.

The following problems were noted:

1. Water - to check on purity
2. Land - fertility and testing
3. Personal - health and job training
4. Crops - reseeding
5. Policing of area

The following agencies assisted in this family's development:

1. Farm Family Rehabilitation Project
2. Extension Service - County Agent
3. Cooperative Area Manpower Planning System
4. Employment Security
5. Department of Health
6. County Forester
7. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation
8. Department of Mental Health

The following accomplishments were recorded:

1. Health:

   A. Medical exams - farmer and wife
   B. Allergy exam - wife
   C. Allergy treatment - wife
   D. Psychological consultation - farmer and wife
   E. Visual exam - wife
   F. Glasses - wife
   G. Continuing psychological counseling

2. Education and Training:

   A. FFRP provided the counseling and motivation necessary to accomplish the above-mentioned improvements in both mental and physical areas.

   B. FFRP provided counseling and training in the areas of herd management. This included culling of the herd, feed recommendations, and roughage requirements.

   C. FFRP provided training in the areas of recordkeeping, fertility and testing, the use of cost-share programs, and woodland management.

   D. County Agent provided on-the-farm soil testing service, made fertilizer recommendations, and provided seeding recommendations.

   E. Employment Security provided and analyzed tests which showed that in intelligence, the farmer ranked in the upper 3 percent of the nation.

F. Department of Health provided necessary equipment and performed a water purity check.

G. County Forester cruised client's woodlands and made recommendations pertaining to its best use. Also provided training to allow client to participate in a woodland improvement program.

H. ASCS, through its cost-share programs, provided encouragement in improving woodland management practices.

I. Department of Mental Health provided psychological counseling that is still continuing.

J. Each of the listed agencies have contributed to this family's development and perhaps more importantly they have made this family aware of the many services that are available for the asking.

Summary:

The actual farm operation has shown only negligible improvement but the family's mental outlook has improved greatly. Mrs. no longer complains of the many aches and pains (some real and some imagined). She talks of making improvements in her housekeeping efforts and appears much more content as a mother. Farmer has taken a spare man position with a local gas station operator; at present this is only a couple of days a month but the fact that he would go down off the hill is a great improvement!

The greatest single attitude change is demonstrated by the fact that this husband and wife, working as a team, have asked for and have received the opportunity to do the bookkeeping for a gas station operator. The importance lies in the fact that this effort was generated within themselves. While the family is still a considerable distance from being self-sufficient, they have taken the first step.

CASE #3, 25 Milking Jerseys - Re-establish Agency Participation in Farm Management

This family consists of the farmer, age 50, 10th grade education; wife, age 40, 8th grade education; and two preschool children - ages 2 and 4. This man is operating a farm owned by his father, who is in his seventies. He has joint title on 64 acres of this land, his home with his father. This farm consists of 300 acres of which 36 are productive tillable acres, 20 acres of open native pasture, and 10 acres of improved pasture - leaving 230 acres of woodland consisting of a sugarbush capable of hanging 1,500 buckets. Balance consists of mixed hard and soft woods with no salvage cutting recorded over a number of years. Strictly a dairy operation, consisting of 25 milking Jerseys with 20 head of young stock which appear to be better than average.

We find no real estate mortgage but short-term liabilities of $1,750.00 owed for grain, fertilizer, groceries, etc.

The following problems were noted:

1. Establish ownership progression of the farm in legal terms so that son and family are protected
2. Re-establish conservation participation, land testing, and a fertilization program
3. Improve forestry management
4. Improve per acre yields of roughage
5. Establish eligibility for Veterans Disability Benefits

The following agencies assisted in this family's development:

1. Farm Family Rehabilitation Project
2. County Forester
3. County Agent
4. Agricultural Stablization and Conservation Service
5. Agriculture Conservation Practices
6. Veterans Administration
7. Department of Agriculture

Accomplishments were noted in the following areas:

1. Health:

   A. General medical examinations - farmer and wife
   B. Internal exam and EKG - farmer
   C. Dental exam - farmer
   D. Dental restoration - farmer

2. Education and Training:

   A. FFRP provided the motivation that resulted in this farmer having the County Forester evaluate the woodlands and make recommendations to improve the management of woodlands and at the same time provide some income.

   B. FFRP aide acting as coordinator promoted a meeting with client, aide and county agent; as a result this client was made aware of improved agronomy practices. Roughage recommendations were made and farm buildings evaluated. New construction costs were debated as were feeding practices. Client signed up for cost-share lime and mixed fertilizer.

   C. FFRP provided training in the following areas:

      a. Buildings
      b. Woodland management
      c. Food Stamp Program
      e. Recordkeeping
      f. Feeding
      g. Cost-share programs
      h. Roughage production

D. In the company of the FFRP aide the State milk inspector visited this dairy operation in an attempt to encourage client and to make suggestions as to how he might best work to meet constantly changing milk regulations without expending large sums of money. As a result of this meeting it was felt that a more complete understanding of each other's problems are appreciated and a closer working relationship will develop.

E. FFRP provided the suggestion that this client make application for Veterans Benefits. The necessary forms were obtained and assistance provided in making application. As a result of this action this family is receiving $70.00 per month.

F. As a result of FFRP encouragement and motivation this client has reestablished contact with the agencies that can provide numerous services in his dairy operation.

Summary:

In the period September 8, 1969, to December 15, 1970, we observed the reestablishment of agency participation in management, building, roughage, feeding as provided by the county agent. Training in woodland management and potential income opportunity was provided by the County Forester.

The participation in the cost-share programs assisted in providing improved roughage, both in quality and quantity.

We have also seen a small benefit received from Veterans Administration; although small, the client is very grateful and just this small addition might well allow this man to continue in his chosen occupation for an additional number of years.

CASE #4, 63-Year-Old Widow, Subsistence Dairy - Maintain Dignity and Independence

Farm woman is a 63-year-old widow, 8th grade education, living alone. She operates a hillside rocky farm totaling 160 acres - 60 tillable, 55 woodland, 40 native open pasture and the balance is considered wasteland. She rents 20 acres of her best land to a neighbor for potato growing. Land appears adequate for client's needs. Barn is in fair condition. Housing is a trailer home that is adequate for needs. Herd consists of 23 head - 10 milkers and balance in young stock. Gross farm income of approximately $5,000, net of $648. This meager income is supplemented by $79.00 per month Social Security. Social Security payment is applied directly to indebtedness, which is $600.

Due to client's age and general poor health, laborsaving devices are much in need, such as barn cleaner and water bowls.

The following problems were noted:

1. Need to improve herd health
2. Improve recordkeeping
3. Update watering system - water bowls
4. Improve land drainage
5. Develop farm pond
6. Install stable cleaner
7. Increase income

The following agencies assisted in this family's development:

1. Farm Family Rehabilitation Project
2. County Agent
3. Soil Conservation Service
4. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
5. Local Bank
6. Cooperative Area Manpower Planning System
7. Employment Security
8. Department of Education

Accomplishments noted in the following areas:

1. Health:

   A. General medical exam
   B. Dental exam
   C. Dentures received
   D. Visual exam
   E. Glasses received

2. Education and Training:

   A. FFRP provided counseling and training in the areas of recordkeeping, both herd and farm records. Worked with client in herd management, including herd health, roughage feeding recommendations, and the use and value of laborsaving equipment.

   B. Cooperating agencies provided service and training in the areas:

      a. County agent called on this family and assisted in installing a system of herd records and farm accounts. He provided guidance in herd management. This resulted in vet care for the herd. He provided assistance in income tax filing, and made it known that he would be glad to continue to help the family when needs arose.

      b. SCS provided an evaluation on land drainage and pond construction. SCS found client's plans were impractical. Agency advice was followed.

      c. ASCS services were requested and personnel will call on this farm when next signup period is announced for participation in cost-share program (lime and fertilizer).

d. The local bank, although not an agency, must be given credit for financing a trailer home that allowed this woman to move from a shack to what she can consider more than adequate living.

e. The activity of CAMPS, the cooperation of the Department of Employment Security, and the Department of Education resulted in this woman being given the opportunity to receive training in Christmas tree and wreathmaking. This may well provide this person with a part-time vocational outlet when age and conditions prevent a continuation of this marginal dairy operation.

f. The coordinating efforts of the FFRP have developed a situation where this client has become aware of the agencies that are available to answer the numerous questions that this aging woman has concerning her dairy operation.

Summary:

No dramatic changes have taken place on this farm but due to the efforts of FFRP in securing laborsaving equipment (gutter cleaner and water bowls) at no cost to the client, plus the general improvement in both physical and mental health, it is feasible to assume that this aging but strong-willed individual may well continue in her chosen work for several years longer than might be expected if the FFRP had not made this modest investment. The dignity and the right of independence of this client cannot be measured in dollars and cents but it was clear that FFRP had played a part in strengthening client morale.

CASE #5, Large Farm Family - Fair Buildings, Land and Livestock in Poor Condition - Dental and Health Problems

This family of eight consists of father, 49 years old, and mother, 48 years old; 3 boys and 3 girls ranging in age from 20 to 6 years. Father 7 years of education and mother 11 years formal education. The farm consists of 295 acres as follows: tillable - 45 acres; pasture - 40 acres; woodland - 210 acres; houselots, etc. - 5 acres.

The problems encountered were as follows:

1. Fields in poor state of cultivation. No fertilizer or lime used and no land improvement practices followed. Resulting in very poor hay crop. No improved pastures. Livestock in poor condition. Land - good heavy loam. Not suitable for row crop production but with improvements could produce excellent crop of hay.

2. Buildings in fair shape. House OK but needs paper and paint. Barn fair. Addition on stable not completed. Farmer making no use of various agencies, such as County Agent, ASCS, SCS. He said they were very nice people but that they do not wish to cooperate with these agencies.

3. Farmer's health is fair. Has breathing problems. Mrs. has had multiple sclerosis but it is arrested.

The following agencies participated in this family's development:

1. Department of Employment Security
2. Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation
3. Medical Profession
4. Town Road Commissioner
5. County Agent
6. Extension Educational Aide
7. Department of Social Welfare
8. Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation Division
9. Agricultural Conservation Program
10. Farm Machinery Dealer
11. Auctioneer
12. Home Health Services
13. Mental Health Services
14. State Board of Education
15. Farm and Home Administration
16. County Forester
17. Rehabilitation Center
18. Public Health Nurse
19. Vocation Instructor
20. Soil Conservation Service

Accomplishments:

1. Health:

   A. Farmer -- General medical, allergy exams, presently receiving allergy medications. Dental exam, lower and upper dentures, visual exam and glasses.

   B. Mrs. -- General medical,dental exam, upper and lower dentures and rebasing, orthopedic exam and posture training.

2. Education and Training:

   A. FFRP -- Training in farm recordkeeping, herd records, land management and forage production, and use of various agencies.

   B. County Agent -- Training farm recordkeeping, herd management, land management.

   C. Extension Education Aide -- Training in home management, etc.

   D. Orleans County Home Health Services -- Physical therapy for paraplegic son.

   E. Vocational Rehabilitation Division -- Training in physical therapy for paraplegic son. Also in job placement.

F. ASCS -- Training in land use and farming practices.

G. SCS -- Training in woodland management practices.

H. Lake Region Union High School -- Training in herd records through son.

3. Income changes -- Farmer has improved milking practices -- size of herd, roughage production and pastures -- thus resulting in approximately 1/3 increase in income at present time; if he continues practices currently followed income should increase appreciably more.

   a. Farm Family Aide has assisted family in applying for food stamp program and medicaid through Social Welfare Department to improve income further.

4. Finances -- Farmer received refinancing through FHA. Sold approximately 100 acres, thus reducing debt load. By doing this now has debt load well under control.

5. Livestock -- Client has sold some low-producing cows and purchased better producers to replace them. Is working to get breeding schedule straightened around to even out production.

6. Land improvements -- Farmer has bulldozed and improved approximately 10 acres pasture. Has plowed, limed, fertilized and seeded nearly all of existing fields, thus resulting in a much better hay crop.

7. Building improvements -- Farmer has papered, painted, and laid new floor coverings in house. Also purchased new furniture to replace old worn out and broken furniture. He also started to complete stable. Spring of 1972 should see the stable completed and gutter cleaner installed.

8. Machinery and equipment -- Farm Family Rehabilitation has purchased new vacuum system for stable and second-hand gutter cleaner to facilitate improved milking practices and lighten workload on farmer. Client has purchased new power takeoff manure spreader to facilitate better manure handling.

Summary:

Family situation has improved greatly from what it was on aide's first visit; both financially and general outlook on life.

In the beginning the farmer had no use for various agencies. Was having very hard time financially and seemed to be going behind gradually.

At aide's suggestions client has started using agencies and by doing so has improved situation tremendously.

About one and one-half years ago, son was involved in automobile accident and suffered spinal damage, resulting in permanent paralysis below shoulders. FF Aide, by enlisting aide of various agencies, has finally succeeded in

getting him admitted into Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center. Hopefully, they will help improve his condition somewhat and also give him training in some field so he can become self-supporting.

CASE #6, Elderly Widower, Unable to Physically Handle Resources - Sufficient Social Security with Greenhouse and Wreath Sales

This is a man of 68 years with 13 years' education; graduated from State Agricultural College. Wife of 63 years when she died. She had received 10 years of education. Farm consisted of 100 acres and as this was more than could be physically handled it was sold down to 6 acres of tillage and 57 of woodland. Cattle and machinery were also sold. A small greenhouse was constructed, and later additions were built on. The land is light sandy soil suitable for market gardening. Mrs. was the motivating force of this family, interested in the greenhouse and the plants offered for sale. Farmer has hernia, but refuses medical attention.

Agencies used:

1. Farm Family Rehabilitation Project -- Training in greenhouse operation, recordkeeping, and medical needs.

2. Extension Service -- Training in greenhouse operation, marketing, recordkeeping, purchasing materials, and legal partnership agreement.

3. Employment Security -- MDTA training, OJT foundry work and auto mechanics.

4. Soil Conservation Service -- Farm plan map.

5. Vermont Department of Taxes -- Tax problems.

6. Social Welfare -- Food stamps, Medicaid.

Accomplishments:

1. Health:

   A. General medical exams
   B. X-rays

2. Education and Training:

   A. Wife graduated from MDTA wreath course. Husband graduated from OJT foundry work. He also received greenhouse management training from aide and county agent. Wife received farm and business records training.

3. Income -- Improved income by sale of wreaths, plants, and garden produce. Expanded greenhouse for increased business potential. No figures available of actual dollar volume.

4. Land -- Purchased commercial fertilizer and lime, peat moss, etc., for greenhouse needs.

5. Buildings -- Remodeled house porch. Constructed addition on greenhouse so as to double capacity. Tore down barn and sold barn boards.

6. Supplemental Income -- Made and sold wreaths and roping estimated at $1500.

7. Equipment -- Purchased garden tractor with tiller attachment for more efficient operation of market garden.

8. Other -- Farmer drawing Social Security. Supplemental income from wreaths and roping. Above greenhouse profits are this man's earned income.

Summary:

This man was an extremely poor farmer and neglected his cows. Cattle were sold. He was trained in foundry work and was employed as long as the foundry operated. When he became unemployed he and wife started the small greenhouse operation and after receiving training and counseling, expanded this business along with the wreaths and novelties. Mrs.' death set this man back for a while, but he has recovered and has started taking interest in this endeavor again.

A son and daughter-in-law have moved in with this man and will assist in housekeeping and greenhouse operation.

I feel this business will progress with demands.

CASE #7, Female Farm Operator - Potential for Increased Production per Cow

This family consists of the farm operator, age 51 with 12th grade education and her totally disabled husband, age 64 with 8th grade education.

Their farm is a small, poorly run hill farm that probably provides a better standard of living for this client, her totally disabled husband, and a retarded hired man, than they could obtain elsewhere. It consists of an antiquated barn with a wooden upstairs stable where both manure and milk are moved by hand. Production is less than 6,000 pounds per cow on 18 cows. There are 165 acres of which 60 are tillable, 46 in native pasture, and 60 acres in woodland. There are no outstanding debts on this farm, which is valued at $35,000. It has been in the family over 100 years and will never be sold if the present owner can help it.

The following problems were noted:

1. Need to increase production per cow; feeding and culling practices.

2. Increase roughage production.

3. Assessment of milking techniques and equipment.
4. Participation in cost-share practices; lime and fertilizer.
5. Farm recordkeeping.

The following agencies assisted in this family's development:

1. Farm Family Rehabilitation Project
2. Extension Service County Agent
3. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

Accomplishments were noted in the following areas:

1. Health:

   A. General medicals for husband and wife. Dental exam, dental restoration, eye exam and eye glasses, otological exam and orthopedic exam and extension exercises. FFRP provided these services and hopefully the client is somewhat more capable of performing her duties as a homemaker and farm manager.

2. Education and Training:

   A. Training by the project was provided in herd management; this covered herd culling, breeding, grain feeding and roughage. Milking equipment and milking techniques were reviewed numerous times with both Mrs. and the hired man.

   B. Roughage production in adequate quantity and quality is another major goal and considerable encouragement was offered in having an early starting date for haying.

   C. A feeding demonstration was developed in cooperation with the client, who supplied the cattle, and the management being provided by the project based on the recommendations of the County Agent. Using three mature cows as an example, we upgraded the client's normal management and supplied additional grain and roughage supplement to bring up to the recommended feeding. The experiment lasted 90 days and was intended to demonstrate that adequate feeding would return a greater profit than the methods that are presently being employed on this farm.

   D. Increased production was obtained during the 90-day period but some other problems of management did surface as a result of this increased milk production.

   E. We did prove that the potential of this farm's cattle is much greater than their production records indicate and that better management and roughage would result in substantial growth of gross income.

   F. County Agent has called on this farm and assisted in income tax work, made suggestions pertaining to their roughage program, and general farm management problems.

G. ASCS has provided client with cost-share materials - lime and mixed fertilizer, as the attempt is made to improve quality and quantity of home grown roughage.

Summary:

The efforts of FFRP have resulted in improved management practices, such as the application of mixed fertilizer and the June starting date for haying. The results of the feeding demonstration has clearly shown that a greater profit can be realized. As a result of this confidence, a tractor and mower were purchased. These are only small steps but we believe that these are in the right direction.

In addition to these cases the project records and other information indicate that such results were repeated many times in the course of the work of the project. Below is a list of types of assistances received from the project as recorded from interviews with families.

Physical Restoration

1. Obtained new false teeth, reducing rheumatism and other troubles.
2. Obtained new glasses for the first time; now can read beneficially.
3. Obtained back brace.
4. Obtained much dental work done on wife.
5. Got injured arm back in shape.
6. Was helped in identifying need for and having hernia operation.
7. Went to hospital several times for surgery, treatment, on special diet.
8. Obtained hearing aid, which is now so helpful in both farming operation and living.
9. Fixed up a farm laborer healthwise who was in bad shape; now planning to get into some specialized farm training opportunities as they develop.
10. Both man and wife going in for further health tests.

Farming Operation and Other Income

1. Refinancing farm debt situation, saving the place from foreclosure; in another case saved farm from being sold cheap to a land speculator.
2. Getting financing for new automatic dairying equipment in barn; in another case financing for building a new barn.

3. Received herd management advice from aide and extension agent, increasing production of herd; also upgrading quality of herd.

4. Received advice on crop management and care of meadows from aide and from the extension agent and SCS brought into the case.

5. Received advice on farm forestry management for income and extension forester.

6. Got financing for a new tractor; another added more cattle; in another case advice and financing have resulted in increasing herd from 10 milk cows to 30.

7. Selling $300-400 worth of Christmas tree decorations based on training received in MDTA short-course; another group of clients took a contract for selling $10,000 worth of wreaths.

8. Got a farm laborer to attend farm machinery course; several farmers also; thus resulting in much saving of repair expenses.

9. Got two sons into MDTA training, both now well employed.

10. Aide advised and helped work out plans for raising veal calves to enhance income.

11. Arrangement made for getting three foster care boarders from State hospital to add to family income.

12. Worked on finding a hired man.

Home and Family

1. Now more willing and able to make contacts with agencies.

2. Got family on food stamp program; another on medicaid.

3. Counseling on parent-son relations to keep youth in family and interested in the farm.

4. Helped get rid of old shack and other cleanup, and a new simple house planned and built.

5. Cleared up procedure for getting Social Security pension.

6. Helped get citizenship straightened out; essential in order to get agencies and firms willing to work with him.

7. Helped daughter get into one-year MDTA nurse training course; now fully employed.

8. Got our youth into a 4-H club. A few client families also have gotten into extension meetings and similar programs.

9. Helped in several cases with family garden projects.

10. Saved the place by aide being persistent with power company in getting power restored to new location of house free of charge, after installation taken away by highway construction.

11. Helped family obtain official guardianship of a youth who was threatened with being taken away.

Several remarked that "the most help received was in keeping up our morale," "aide help came just in time," "project makes us feel like we are worth helping," "the first person in a long time who seemed to care about us."

The fact is that even though near the poverty or welfare line, rural people are proud; they have a desirable stability and essential attachment to place and community, satisfying enough style of life. All they need and want is a little help where and as they are, which to them would be far more sensible than moving away to town or city and welfare. Communities basically are viable enough for improvement through area organization and efforts.

Results From Viewpoints of Staff

Field staff members were asked what they felt they had most accomplished with client families; what results of the project had given them the greatest satisfactions. These are summarized and listed below, not necessarily in any order of importance or classification, because their importance would vary by cases and some would be interrelated with one another.

... Getting the family on its feet, on a more solid footing.

... Seeing the family make specific improvements or take other specific actions as a result of your suggestions.

... Having the vocational rehabilitation services brought to people and seeing the improvements in health, giving the family new lift.

... Seeing the family have a more secure financial position due to the help provided relative to credit.

... Changes seen in management of farm and home affairs; more informed and skilled about how to do things, resulting in more income and improved quality of living.

... Having a part in facilitating the short-course job training and getting clients enrolled in these, then seeing them make use of or benefiting from this training.

... Getting families to do a better job of planning ahead.

... Seeing the improved attitude on the part of the families -- more confidence in themselves, more courage, more dignity and pride now; gladness from now being in a better situation.

... Seeing the family become more self-reliant, more willing and able to seek out further assistances and services of various resources.

... Seeing that the resource agencies are cooperative in serving the disadvantaged families.

... Improved youth situation in some of the families; several have been moved into more education; the better family situation improves the confidence and attitudes of the young people, too.

Both Economic and Human Benefits

The types of accomplishments mentioned in the above list reveal both economic benefits and human benefits of such a project; it does give rise to both kinds and one is just as important as the other. Of course, the highly tangible gains are usually the easiest and most recognized but often the less tangible or intangible gains are even more important to the family.

The tangible benefits are seen in such things as greater farm productivity, increases in income, improvements in health, stronger financial position in ownership of the place, improved physical surroundings. But just as important, or perhaps more so, have been the intangible benefits of the project, such as:

*** The family having greater feeling of security.

*** The family having greater self-confidence, courage, uplift of morale, new motivation.

*** The family having increased skills, knowledge, and abilities to do the things that need to be done.

*** The family having a feeling of home-place values being preserved; it does not have to move away.

*** The family getting out into functioning society, with more willingness and ability to seek out assistances, meet needs.

*** The greater concern of agencies in broadening programs or improving delivery of services to better serve all segments of rural communities.

*** More teamwork of cooperation among agencies, focusing on problems of the people rather than just on participation of people in the agency special-interest program or subject.

The total cost of the three-year project figures out to be about $540 per client family, which is far less than some welfare programs and is insignificant when viewed in comparison with the improved income and living conditions of the families served. In many cases this cost would be covered in the first year's increase of income and better living. Also, for many this first cost will be the only cost of such welfare input. The point is that the project is primarily a self-help program with emphasis on faith in people and investing in them for greater productivity -- truly human resource development based on agency program adjustments.

It is not a give-away program at all, but rather represents expanding the outreach of related educational services. This must be the direction of programs that would truly serve the large segment of Rural America faced with special problems.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS -- LESSONS LEARNED

General Conclusions

The Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project demonstrated that:

... There are many rural families in Vermont who need and want educational assistance and who can only be served by an intensive personal approach.

... Families in need of rehabilitation can be effectively served by a personal approach and brought into more adequate health, income and living situations.

... Two agencies having programs most directly concerned with the total situation of disadvantaged families can work as a team. The results obtained could never have been obtained without the input of both Vocational Rehabilitation and the Extension Service, provided in coordinated fashion and with other pertinent agencies.

... Institutional patterns of specialized agency programs can be adjusted and shared without undue violence of programs when effective service to the people is the central focus.

... A rehabilitation program requires personnel having particular qualifications and continued inservice training is essential.

... A program such as that represented by the purpose and methods of the Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project can receive the support of local government and the people.

... A rehabilitation program can result in expansion of delivery of services by referral of families to agencies who otherwise would not be serving them.

... A rehabilitation program can have both economic and human development satisfactions and the two are interrelated, each being highly important to the other, and one just as important as the other.

Probably the three most significant factors contributing to the success of the project were: (1) the Extension Vocational Rehabilitation team approach, (2) the high commitment of staff to serving rural families having special problems as encountered in the client cases, and (3) the strong, controlled but practical supervision.

Field Staff Factors

1. Staff perceptions and relationships -- One of the main findings of the study was the apparent influence of attitudes and perceptions of the aides and counselors upon the success of the project. They were found to be deeply understanding, appreciative and concerned about the situations of the families they came in contact with for enrollment which, in turn, produced high motivation and commitment to the purpose of the project. Always central in their thinking and work was service in the interests of the family, even if it meant working late at night, constant patience in counseling, leading by the hand, and providing other necessary personal assistances in actions leading to improvement of situations.

Actually, the staff members initially had been carefully selected with all this in mind. Then they were provided meaningful orientation, in-service training and continued careful supervision, accordingly.

Our evaluation tended to show that not only did all this pay off, but that it clearly appeared to be one of the main keys to the success of the project. No matter where we went -- clients, public agencies, local officials -- the remarks we heard about the competence and conduct of the aides and counselors were preponderantly favorable. Part of this apparently was because the project itself was perceived to be sound -- "really this is the kind of program to have." But the favorableness was mostly because of the understanding and commitment evidenced by the staff members themselves.

"Mr. _____ listened, he tried to understand our problems, he was sympathetic, he gave us encouragement, he came back soon on his own without waiting to be asked, with helpful advice and the next things to do." This pretty well sums up the perception by clients of the aides and counselors, which invariably led to positive steps for improvement. The clients were on a first name basis, almost a family relationship, with the aides and counselors. "We were always glad to see him come," was a frequently heard comment.

Another helpful factor in this was that of having field staff offices close to the people, not attached to any particular agency.

2. Aide-counselor relationships and operations -- Here again our study revealed complete cooperativeness based on mutual interest in client cases. Roles were clearly defined from the beginning, kept constantly

reviewed, and each supported the other. It was reported that at first certain agency regulations required certain steps which another could at times do just as well for efficiency sake (for example, delivery of papers to be signed), and such regulations were relaxed as aides and counselors became more jointly involved in cases and familiar with various aspects of the total assistance to the cases.

We found that aides did not do Vocational Rehabilitation counseling as such, nor did the counselors provide farm advice, but each could and did do certain errands relative to each other's roles. Cases were always reviewed together from time to time, with the project coordinator also frequently included, and sometimes the family would be visited by the aide and counselor together.

The point is the highly cooperative aide-counselor relationships were a major factor in the success of the project, just as important as staff client relationships. We found all these relationships not only favorable, but also that they were felt by the persons concerned to be very important.

Close supervision, facilitated by records of all client visits, written referrals, written results of actions, and frequent field staff visits of the project coordinator with written review of case plans and followup -- all this was a major part of the project operation which not only called for but helped develop much teamwork and contributed to the total success of the total project. It did require considerable paper work on the part of the staff, but it also provided highly useful data for project evaluation and accountability, and it taught staff members the art and importance of systematic procedure.

3. Staff recruitment and training -- aides and counselors were recruited by the project director and coordinator, including approval as necessary by the State Vocational Rehabilitation Office, on the basis of personal contacts with prospects, either by the project first contacting a prospect or a prospect first contacting the project. Prospects were very carefully interviewed and vita examined, from the standpoint of the purposes and nature of the project, in order to make sure that the prospect had the attitudes essential to successfully doing the job.

The initial training included two weeks' classroom orientation and one week of trial or practice field work with clients, under the observation of the project coordinator who already had three years' service on the previous farm aide project. Subsequent training has included two four-day seminars which have included informal exchange of ideas based on experiences, talks by extension and vocational rehabilitation officials, by social psychologists on how to work with disadvantaged people, and by specialists of various referral agencies explaining their resources and procedures.

Staff members were asked several opinion questions that directly relate to recruitment and training based on their experiences in the project, as follows:

a) What did they feel were the most essential attributes for one to have in order to be successful in such work? Their replies included:

... Must have a basic concern for the welfare of people; an attitude of care.

... Must have good background of general farm knowledge and of rural home living; and especially a lot of good common sense.

... Ability to relate positively to clients, see their situations and adapt remarks accordingly, transmitting ideas in their language geared to their concerns.

... Ability to listen; able to reason with a family.

... Patience -- must understand family situation and be willing to take time for clients to make up their minds, must realize that they are not going to jump at one's seemingly good suggestions.

... Humility -- staff member must put aside his own ego, being able to lead people to their own decisions and letting the conclusions be their own.

... Must be able to cooperate positively with resource agencies that have the expertise for dealing with the problems, and help them constructively relate to the actual case conditions without hurting agency pride or presumed prerequisites; staff member may need to change his recommendation a bit, too.

... Positive, not negative, attitude.

... Must be able to withstand the cultural shock that may be felt when facing the real poverty conditions or other unfavorable factors that one may encounter upon the first visit.

... The secretaries expressed similar attributes plus themselves needing to have a good understanding of the program, of staff roles, and a general knowledge of farming and rural living.

b) What aspects of the job were of most help to them in working successfully with the families? Their replies included:

... The access to and cooperation of resource agencies; getting to know a lot about the agencies and their programs.

... The staff meetings and training sessions that dealt with specific subjects, ideas, problems.

... The team approach with Vocational Rehabilitation whose help was so important to getting many cases on a stronger basis; also the teamwork or mutual support among staff in sharing ideas about family problems and possible solutions.

... Ease in getting rapport with families that stems from being able to operate at their level on their concerns.

... The overall approach which enabled correction to begin where the family was; being able to work on the first problems first without the burden of carrying any particular agency program solution or axe to grind.

c) What aspects of the job seemed to give you the most difficulty in working successfully with the families? Replies of the aides and counselors included:

... The sometimes considerable delays and checking back on referrals, often involving considerable red tape; sometimes hard to convince an agency or other resource to accept the case and lend assistance.

... Frustrations from having certain funds stopped or programs changed, causing new problems in working out plans with client families.

... Difficulty of knowing just what to recommend in cases where situation is so complex, so many variable factors. It is here where the team-work among staff is a real help.

... Finding the key to motivation, getting families to feel the need for change and being willing to take the first steps. Sometimes may take several months to reach this point.

... Getting family to the first medical examination.

... Hard to pull out all the significant facts of situation from some families.

Some of these points are oftentimes related to one another and are partly a matter of overcoming the suspicions of clients to staff. As one client said, "it took quite a while before I was sure what he was up to."

4. Likes and dislikes of the work -- All aides and counselors were asked about what they liked most about their work on the project and what they liked least or not at all. They reported liking most the idea of helping people; the work with rural people and conditions; the satisfaction of seeing the successful results and advancement of clients -- keeping them above welfare; the fact that the project permitted working with families on a friendly, realistic basis relevant to their total situation; the fact that it made the vocational rehabilitation program so much more meaningful; the challenge of helping families with their problems; and that it seeks out families to overcome their shyness and give them encouragement for corrective actions, rather than a program which requires initial sophisticated responses that most disadvantaged families are simply not prepared to make, especially in rural areas.

On the other side of the coin, the staff members agreed on liking least the paper work, the complicated situations encountered, the sometimes long wait for action or slowness of change on the part of clients, the frustrations in sometimes having to wait for action from referrals, and the

really unfortunate or awful conditions they sometimes encountered in first contacts. "You have to not let the cultural shock get you down," said one counselor.

Relationships of Staff With System

Over and above the contacts of staff members with each other as teams and with client families, another important aspect of the Rural and Farm Rehabilitation Project was the relationship of staff within the Extension system itself and with other referral agencies or program resources.

Within Extension the project operated as more or less an autonomous entity under the direction of the State Extension Supervisor (Agriculture and Resource Development) who provided leadership for the necessary coordination within the system, including with the county extension staff who in turn related the project to the county extension advisory boards. All this seemed to work out a little more enthusiastically in some counties than in others.

Interviews with staff indicated that the willing and able cooperation of the county extension staff members was one of the highlights contributing to the success of the project. This functioned best where referrals were handled on an informal, personal basis with as little paper work as possible. Especially useful were the regular meetings of the project staff teams with the respective county extension staffs in which various client cases were reviewed and suggestions about them discussed. This had the two-fold benefit of keeping Extension informed and of providing a "check or advisory" technical input to the project staff in the handling of given cases.

The county home economists and the nutrition aides in certain counties were especially helpful as a program resource in dealing with certain family living problems encountered, but County Extension's resource input was largely on matters of agriculture and forestry. State specialist assistance also was generally readily available and very helpful, especially in connection with project staff training meetings.

Interviews with some State extension people revealed their willingness to assist with the project, but also their general feeling of lack of knowledge about the project and their desire for greater involvement in the planning of the activities in which they were expected to contribute.

The interest of Extension staff members in the project was influenced by their sense of Extension mission. If this tended to be large-scale commercial agricultural oriented, there was naturally less interest in the Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project which was primarily concerned with small-scale and disadvantaged situations.

A total of 11,783 referrals were made to 24 different agencies or types of services during the nearly 3 years of the project. Most referrals went to county Extension, vocational rehabilitation, manpower training and education programs, Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Stablization

and Conservation Service, and to the Farmers Home Administration. Interviews with professional workers of such agencies as SCS, FHA, ASCS, Forest Service, Employment Security, and welfare offices tended to strongly verify this contention, although there were individual differences here and there dependent on one's own knowledge of the local agriculture and his understanding of his own program policies.

Some project aides and counselors took more time than others to get acquainted with and keep informed about various agency programs.

The question of what is best for families in terms of socioeconomic policy is not always clear. But to the families themselves the matter is very clear -- they strongly believe that they are better off being given "hand-up" assistance as they are where they are, to enable them to stay on their places and off public welfare, rather than to have to move away and live on a "hand-out" basis.

Coordination with the State Vocational Rehabilitation Division, a parent of the project, was maintained on a continuing basis through the contacts and reports of the counselors and the Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor working on the project.

Officials of the Vocational Rehabilitation Division were "highly pleased" with the results of this new "team approach" project. It enabled the Vocational Rehabilitation program to reach effectively into rural areas. The increased number of families served resulted in the Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation Division being ranked second among all States in the percentage increase of case closures for 1970-71. Records also showed that the work of the counselors on the project compared favorably with that of other counselors in the State.

"The team approach, which provided more open access to relevant educational and assistance services, resulted in an added dimension to rehabilitation efforts, making possible more effective and easily achieved rehabilitation than otherwise would have been the case," said both the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor supervisor on the project and State officials.

A few suggestions pertinent to internal system relationships are listed below:

1. Do not put paraprofessionals of such projects in tenure, because of the special funding.

2. Keep staff on the project in the field as much as possible, both professionals and paraprofessionals.

3. Provide for and involve paraprofessionals in the planning and conduct of inservice training, but do not include them with professionals in annual conferences on such meetings.

4. Use volunteers in such a program, too, especially homemakers active in the home economics extension program.

5. Strive to have new clientele enter the mainstream of Cooperative Extension.

6. Provide plenty of recognition for paraprofessionals.

The Original Objectives in Perspective

Several objectives in mind at the outset of the project, along with various operational steps taken relevant to the achievement of them, were mentioned in an earlier section. Now some overall conclusions or interpretations from the findings of our evaluation, with respect to these objectives, are briefly described here.

Objective 1 -- To develop greater coordination among services. There is no doubt but what progress was made toward this objective. In the first place, Extension and Vocational Rehabilitation, two agencies having important services beneficial to disadvantaged rural families, did develop practical, effective working relations and procedures that led to definite improvements in family situations. Likewise, did greater coordination develop with other agencies for the effective channeling of their services to such families. Clients have learned more about services available, too, and to use them. All agencies learned more about the nature of rural family needs. This understanding became useful not only in more effective delivery of a particular service, but also useful in designing special areawide activities like manpower training courses for greater services to these families. Relationships of the project with public officials and community leaders produced greater understanding of rural family conditions. The result was a closer coordination of efforts for the benefit of rural people.

Objective 2 -- To bring about greater commitment and organizational services essential to maximum effectiveness in providing services to rural farm and nonfarm families needing them. Agencies learned to locate services closer to the people. They learned how to take on added responsibilities, relate to other program leadership, and adapt their own program policies and procedures to assist clientele that otherwise would not be assisted.

Agencies learned that the work of one could facilitate the work of another, resulting in both having greater coverage or service to society. They learned that traditional "standards" of procedure could be changed or performed by others, not without endangering accomplishment but actually increasing teamwork perceptions among themselves as well as among clientele and also increasing efficiency in delivery of assistances. They learned that through a teamwork approach, reduction in numbers of visits to clientele actually could result, leading both to greater efficiency and to less time and confusion on the part of clientele.

Agencies learned that by sharing clientele cases with resources, more nearly adequate solutions to cases might be designed and implemented. Agencies learned that they could adapt programs so that they would be workable with disadvantaged families, not only without hurting professional and agency pride but actually resulting in increasing coverage and improved image from having a broader program. It was also learned that local advisory committees are willing to support adjustments in program in order to broaden delivery of services, especially where they realize the need for greater cooperation among programs and adaptation of programs to their local conditions.

Agencies also learned that working together in staff teams or other coordinated efforts offered opportunities for broader training and wider understanding of both professional and paraprofessional staff members and also resultant opportunities for career advancement. Extension also learned that a new aide position could be established in the State personnel classification system, which could be used as a guide in recruitment and also allow sufficient flexibility to be workable for program use.

Objective 3 -- To strengthen selection, development and supervision of aides and counselors that they might most effectively relate to and assist rural farm and nonfarm families. Several things in the operation of the project were found to have been done to this end. These included having job descriptions written to fit the positions and the positions established in the State personnel classification system. Attitudes and experiences are given at least as much weight in aides selection as academic training. At least two weeks' orientation was provided plus a week of practice on the job under supervision. Extra effort was made to clarify roles and keep reviewing them.

A system of daily work records, referral records, and client case records was developed. It was found to be not only workable, but highly useful in enabling supervision to be more helpful to staff on the many client and referral problems encountered during the course of a week's work. Aides and counselors were treated as important members of the project total staff team, with supervision being firm but on a sharing or involvement basis. Staff was found to be well pleased with operational procedures and assistances provided with only the paper work being the main dislike.

Staff members did express high rating for the value of importance of the training and assistances provided, but they expressed the desire for more group training on special problem subjects and about "what makes people tick." Human relations relative to working with referral people and the public was found to be an area somewhat neglected and training in it desired. Our evaluation indicated that in any project involving aides relating to referral agencies, it is also important that these agencies be kept informed about the respective project or program and especially about the results of their referral work.

Objective 4 -- To develop greater understanding of community about project purposes, client situations and project progress. Several things were done to achieve this objective in each of the four field areas of the

project. Local leaders and officials visited did have some understanding of the project and their thoughts of it were generally favorable; although in one or two cases there were indications that the people knew it more by staff member names than by the name of the project. Some offices worked more on this objective than others. In general, it appeared that more could and should be done as public knowledge and opinion are quite important to the success of such a project.

There was virtually no stigma attached to participation in the project; not even clients were concerned. The common statement reviewed from interviewers was that "such things are generally regarded around here as one's own personal business and no one expects it to be talked about; we are a friendly community one and all."

That aspect of relations which helps officials, such as overseers of the poor and civic leaders, to better know about the facts of local conditions is important, and some field staff members had made contributions to this end upon occasion. It would appear that such community relations must be a part of any project of this nature. And important to it is competency of staff members for doing it.

Objective 5 -- To bring about more delivery of various agency services in relation to total family situations. The client was considered to be both individual and family, engaged in farming or related occupation, which altogether make up the total situation. The idea was the basis of this project and gave it a particular uniqueness.

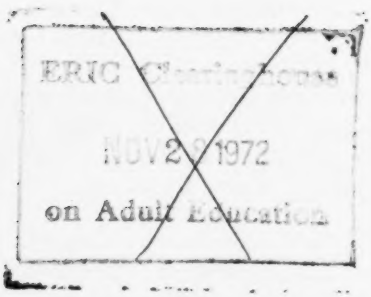
Our study showed that it not only was highly workable, but that it was a major factor in the success of the project adequately assisting the families. Based on the aide and counselor analysis of total family situation, including the health factor, family problems and difficulties were discussed, with suggested steps for improvement identified and implementing actions undertaken over time according to the motivation of the family. It was always the family's decision to act, although much guidance and assistance was sometimes provided to enable them to do so.

The unique role of the aides and counselors was to facilitate bringing the other needed resources into the situation; the resources then worked with the family in a much more meaningful environment. It was delivering service to a family that probably would not otherwise be reached, and doing so in relation to the actual family need which, in turn, works to stimulate motivation of the client to carry through. Interviews with agencies indicated that they could see this chain of relationship which meant expansion of their services as well as more effective results on the part of clients.

The underlying problems of families are part of a system of conditions. To recognize this fact, and design programs for the delivery of services in relation to total family situations, is the only way that rural families in disadvantaged situations can be effectively assisted to increased incomes and improved quality of living.

Finally, the evaluation points out that a project of this nature can effectively be an integral part of Cooperative Extension education. This project is consistent with the best meaning of Extension. Making this type of project an integral part of Extension requires a strong philosophical understanding, commitment and competence on the part of all staff. The ultimate key to success is the training and motivation of staff members.

We found that rural families living in disadvantaged situations, amid a variety of interrelated problems and difficulties, can be led out of poverty and kept above the poverty threshold. And the gains are far more than what can be measured in terms of Cost-Benefit Ratio.



APPENDIX I

Forms used by Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project 1/

1. Project Brochure
2. Work Schedules, Aides and Counselors
3. Contact Report
4. Intra-Agency Referral with Referral Card
5. Time Study Sheets

6. Agency Referral
7. Analysis of Farm Problems
8. Case History Form
9. Active Case Review with County Agent
10. Milking Check Sheet

11. Case Review, Aide and Counselor
12. Expense Account
13. Leave Record
14. Application for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Including Notice of Civil Rights Compliance
15. Diagnostic Authorization

16. Transfer of Case
17. Restoration Authorization
18. Authorization to Medical Center Hospital of Vermont
19. Training Authorization
20. Consent Authorization

21. Travel Authorization
22. Monthly Referral and Caseload Report
23. Master List of Cases
24. Dental Examination
25. Report of Ear-Nose-Throat Examination and Audiogram

26. Physician's Report of Eye Examination
27. Medical Consultant Worksheet
28. General Medical Examination
29. Receipt of Hearing Aid
30. Occupational Tools and Equipment Agreement

31. Bill Approval Form
32. Invoice
33. Counselor's Case Report
34. Supervisory Procedural Review
35. Case Service Report: Federal-State Program of Vocational Rehabilitation

1/ Available upon request to Cooperative Extension Service, University of Vermont, Burlington 05401